

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Fort A.P. Hill, the wonderful military facility in Caroline County.

My trip coincided with Fort A.P. Hill winning the Army Chief of Staff Communities of Excellence Award for Fiscal Year 2008. The award is presented annually to an installation for its exemplary efforts in providing support to Soldiers, civilian employees, retirees and their families. It recognizes continuous business process improvements, individual innovation, groundbreaking initiatives and dedication to efficiency and customer care.

I would like to congratulate Lt. Col. Michael Graese, the staff and all the men and women who serve at Fort A.P. Hill for winning this award. I have had the privilege of visiting Fort A.P. Hill on several occasions and each time I have been impressed by the dedication to excellence that each soldier and staff member exhibited. Fort A.P. Hill is one of the finest military training posts in the world, and I am pleased that they were able to receive the recognition they so richly deserve.

I got to see this excellence up close and personal during my visit last week. While I was there, I saw just how the installation provides realistic joint and combined arms training as well as logistics and support capabilities that enable America's Defense Forces to win in the 21st Century Operational environment. Lt. Col. Graese provided a very extensive tour--I think I only missed one or two of the 75, 794 acres!! I saw approximately 10 of the 41 weapons ranges, the assault landing strip, 2 aerial training areas, and a number of camps.

I was most impressed by the diversity of the training that occurs on the grounds and the capabilities of the facilities. The Combined Arms Collective Training Facility and the Modular Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain facility impressed me in that they can both provide realistic, varied, and flexible training opportunities to our men and women going in harm's way. A.P. Hill provides the opportunity for our warriors from all branches of the service and government agencies to constantly update and refine their fighting skills and abilities and also serves as a regional combat center for reserve units in order that they maintain their combat readiness. This diversity of training capabilities provides all that use the facility the opportunity to operate, train, and improve their effectiveness. We must train as we fight. It was General George Patton that stated the importance of training when he said "The more we sweat in training, the less we bleed in battle." As they say, A.P. Hill really does provide "The Best Training and Support-Anywhere." It is where America's military sharpens its combat edge, and I am honored to have A. P. Hill in Virginia's First Congressional District.

The personnel of Fort A.P. Hill should be very proud of their accomplishments. Over 80,000

warriors from each branch of the military are trained at Fort A.P. Hill every year. Their level of professionalism demonstrates a true commitment to all of our fighting men and women around the globe.

Fort A.P. Hill will be recognized by the Army in a Pentagon ceremony on May 8. As the Army's first place winner, Fort A.P. Hill will also represent the Army at the Department of Defense Commander in Chief's Award Ceremony for Installation Excellence later in that day. I am tremendously proud of the fine folks who worked so hard to earn this great honor and on behalf of a grateful nation I wish to thank them for their commitment to our warriors and the security of our nation.